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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN OBSERVER MISSIONS CALLS DRC
ELECTIONS CREDIBLE AND TRANSPARENT

¶1. (U) The South African Observer Mission (SAOM) characterized the DRC's October 29 presidential and provincial elections as "democratic, peaceful, credible, and transparent." The 108-member observer mission was deployed in all eleven provinces, with an average of three teams in each. It was led by Deputy Defense Minister Mluleki George and included members of parliament, government officials, and civil society organizations.

¶2. (U) The SAOM announcement came in an October 31 press release, which serves as an interim statement covering the period October 13-31. It highlighted several observations from both the electoral process and election day:

- o Voter lists were made available at polling centers for inspection prior to the election.

- o Voters whose names were missing or who had lost their voting cards were assisted by the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI).

- o The High Authority for Media was able to more effectively enforce a media code of conduct.

- o The electorate was "reasonably informed" thanks to an effective voter education campaign by governmental, non-governmental, and political party networks.

¶3. (U) The South African observers found that the majority of voter stations opened on time and operated smoothly, with proceedings followed by party representatives and national and international observers. They did not witness any major incidents or irregularities, and characterized the general atmosphere as "calm." The SAOM praised the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) for its professionalism and impartiality and the national police for the security provided. They also commended the two presidential candidates for agreeing to a Joint Appeal and Declaration calling for a peaceful election process.

¶4. (U) SAOM will remain in the DRC for the counting process and the announcement of results.

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